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PLAY INDIAN MUSIC IN FLIGHTS, AIRPORTS: AVIATION MINISTRY

The ministry's direction to airlines and airport operators comes after ICCR's request to promote Indian music in Indian flights

'MOST GLOBAL AIRLINES PLAY DOMESTIC MUSIC'

In its letter to all airlines and airports asking them to consider playing Indian music in their flights and terminal premises, the civil aviation ministry noted that music played by most airlines across the globe is invariably that of the parent country of the airline. For example, Jazz in an American airline or Mozart in an Austrian airline, and Arab music in an airline from West Asia

'INDIAN PLANES RARELY PLAY DESI SONGS'

- "Indian airlines seldom play Indian music in the flight, whereas, our music has a rich heritage and culture... Owing to India's vastness and diversity, Indian music encompasses numerous genres in multiple varieties and forms, which include classical music, folk, light vocal, instrumental music," the ministry noted

ICCR

THE INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS IS AN AUTONOMOUS BODY

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Insurer can't deny claim citing existing illness: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

NO insurance company can refuse a mediclaim citing a medical condition that the policyholder disclosed while signing up for the policy, the Supreme Court has ruled. A bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and B V Nagarathna has also said that the policyholder has to disclose to the insurer all material facts within his or her knowledge, adding that the buyer is presumed to know all the facts and circumstances concerning the insurance.

While policyholders can only disclose what is known to them, their duty is not confined to their actual knowledge but extends to those material facts which, in the ordinary course of business, they ought to know, the apex court said.

"Once the policy has been issued after assessing the medical condition of the insured, the insurer cannot repudiate the claim by citing an existing medical condition, which was disclosed by the insured in the proposal form and which condition has led to a particular risk in respect of which the claim has been made by the insured," said the bench in a recent judgment. The verdict came during an appeal filed by one Manmohan Nanda against an order of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) rejecting his plea seeking a claim for medical expenses incurred in the US.

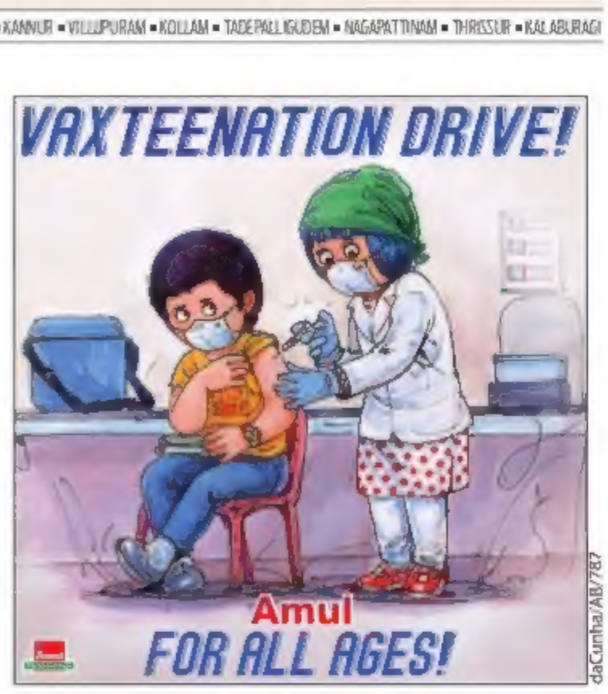
Nanda had bought an overseas mediclaim business and holiday policy from the United India Insurance Company as he intended to travel to the US. Upon reaching the San Francisco airport, he suffered a heart attack and was admitted to a hospital. Subsequently, an angioplasty was performed on him and three stents were inserted to remove the blockage from heart vessels. In his petition, he said his claims for treatment expenses were repudiated by the insurer stating that the appellant had a history of hyperlipidaemia (high cholesterol) and diabetes, which was not disclosed while buying the insurance policy.

The NCDRC had ruled that since the complainant had been under statin medication, which was not disclosed while buying the mediclaim policy, he failed to comply with his duty to fully disclose his health conditions.

The SC, however, said the repudiation of the claim by United India Insurance Company was not in accordance with law.

It said the object of buying a mediclaim policy is to seek indemnification in respect of a sudden illness or sickness that is not expected or imminent and that may occur overseas.

Once the policy has been issued after assessing the medical condition of the insured, the insurer cannot repudiate the claim by citing an existing medical condition – Supreme Court



Clause on comorbid 60-plus producing doctor's certificate at vax centre for booster dose dropped

2 more vaccines and a pill added to combat Covid

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

AS India prepares to deal with the surge in Covid-19 infections with booster vaccine doses amid anxiety over the highly infectious Omicron variant, it has added three more tools — two vaccines and a drug — to its armour.

The Drug Controller General of India on Tuesday gave emergency use authorisation (EUA) to Covid vaccines Covovax and Corbevax, apart from Covid drug molnupiravir, which will be manufactured by 13 companies locally. The approvals came within hours of the subject expert committee on Covid-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation recommending EUA for them.

Parallelly, the Centre ended a hassle of furnishing a medical certificate for the 60-plus with comorbidities for taking the booster shot, by dropping the clause. It means all senior citizens with comorbidities are eligible for what the Centre calls is a precautionary jab.

Of the vaccines approved on Tuesday, Corbevax has been made by Hyderabad-based Biological E. Covovax is the Indian version of Novavax. (see box)

Molnupiravir is meant for restricted use for treating adult patients with blood oxygen levels at 93% and having a high-risk of progression of the infection, including hospitalisation or death. It should be taken twice a day for not more than five days.

Biological E conducted phase 1, 2 and 3 clinical trials of Corbevax in the country, apart from a phase 3 active comparator clinical trial to evaluate superiority against Covishield, the Centre informed. However, data from none of these clinical trials have yet been released in the public domain.

The Union health ministry said Covovax had shown efficacy of 90.4% and 86.9% respectively in the US and UK during phase 3 trials. It added that SII conducted phase 2/3 immuno-bridging clinical trails in the country for comparing safety and immunogenicity of this vaccine.

On molnupiravir, the regulator received applications from 22 manufacturers but approved only 13.

Clearing the air on comorbidities, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhsuhan wrote to states saying anyone over 60, on their doctor's advice, can now take the shot and will not be required to show the co-morbidity certificate at the vaccination centre. The letter comes after a section of people, including doctors, had protested the requirement of doctors' certificate. "When there is no provision of such a certificate in India's healthcare system to avail of any service, why create this hurdle?" said a senior medical professional at AIIMS, Delhi, who is a member of the ICMR advisory group on Covid-19 clinical management.

BIGGER & BETTER BASKET

India's basket of vaccines cleared for restricted emergency use just got bigger. A look

Approved

1. **Covovax:** Nanoparticle vaccine by Serum Institute of India
2. **Corbevax:** India's first indigenously developed RBD protein sub-unit vaccine by Biological E
3. **Molnupiravir:** 200 mg anti-Covid pill to be manufactured by 13 pharma firms, including Sun Pharma, Cipla, Hetero, Dr Reddy's and Torrent

Already cleared

Covishield (Serum Institute) • Covaxin (Bharat Biotech) • ZyCoV-D (Zydus Cadila) • Sputnik V (Russia) • Moderna (US), • Johnson and Johnson (US)

Yellow alert in Delhi

- Level 1 or yellow alert for Covid restrictions imposed from Tuesday due to rise in cases
- All educational institutions to be shut; wedding, funeral gatherings restricted to 20 people. Marriage functions to be only allowed in court or at homes
- Night curfew advanced to 10 pm from 11 pm; will end at 5 am
- Total ban on cinemas, auditoriums, spas, Yoga centres, gyms and entertainment parks
- Seating capacity in Delhi Metro, buses cut by 50%

Bengaluru firm to launch oral drug to fight virus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

BENGALURU pharma company Strides Pharma Science Limited said that it has received Emergency Use Authorisation from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to launch Molnupiravir, an oral medication for Covid-19 in India.

In a statement, Strides said it will "immediately launch" its generic Molnupiravir, indicated for high-risk adult patients with Covid under the brand Stripiravir.

The company is commercialising the product with a group-integrated supply chain for active pharmaceutical ingredients and solid oral dosage from its large-scale WHO pre-qualified manufacturing capacities, the company stated.

"We are delighted to receive the DCGI approval for launching Molnupiravir, which has shown promising results in several clinical studies. It provides benefit to patients with mild-to-moderate Covid symptoms," Strides Managing Director and CEO R Ananthanarayanan said. P9

A man gives his sample at KSR Railway Station in Bengaluru | VINOD KUMAR T

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

Dec 27 65,20,037 doses

Dec 28 57,78,358 doses

TOTAL: 145,07,02,567

NATIONWIDE	DEC 27	DEC 28
Fresh cases	6,531	6,358
Recoveries	7,141	6,450
Deaths	315	293

KARNATAKA	DEC 27	DEC 28
Fresh cases	289	356
Recoveries	254	347
Deaths	4	2

GOVT GRANTS VRS TO BHASKAR RAO

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

FORMER Bengaluru police commissioner and Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Bhaskar Rao will demit office on December 31 after the government approved his application for voluntary retirement. He will be relieved from service at the end of this month. Rao confirmed to TNIE that the government has cleared him for voluntary retirement.

On reports that he would enter politics after hanging up his boots, he said he has not made any such decision. "I would like to travel, teach and spend time with my family at my native place," he said.

An Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of 1990 batch, Rao had applied for voluntary retirement from service (VRS) in September this year. In his application, he had requested to be relieved immediately. His file was pending with the chief minister and it is only recently that the latter signed on it. With the superannuation of Rao, a second post of ADGP rank will fall vacant in the state. The post of ADG, Communications, Logistics & Modernisation is vacant. The post of Bengaluru police commissioner too is of ADGP rank.

CONTINUED ON: P5

EXPRESS READ

Gang burns alive supplier at dhaba

Bengaluru: In a horrific incident, a 29-year-old staffer at a dhaba on the outskirts of Bengaluru was burnt alive by members of a gang after he asked them to settle their bill. The gang also set the dhaba on fire. The staffer, Manoj — who had suffered severe burns, died on Tuesday. The incident occurred at U-Turn Dhaba on Nelamangala Highway near Hesaraghatta Main Road on Friday, the police said. P5

SA TEST

INDIA IN CONTROL

Indian pacers lived up to their reputation by bundling out South Africa for 197. In the second innings of the first Test, India were at 16/1 on Tuesday, the third day of the tie. Shami scalped five | P15

LOOKING BACK 2021 LOOKING AHEAD

GLOBAL WARMING AT DOORSTEP P4

NOT HIS TIME

Flight delay, traffic jam... CM gets taste of common man's woes, first hand

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

FOR the political top shot and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, it was common man's problems that troubled him for the second day in a row on Tuesday. Bommai, who was to reach Hubballi – which is an hour away by air, had to wait nearly four hours in Bengaluru despite booking a special, chartered flight.

Bommai and his team promptly reached the HAL Airport in time on Tuesday morning to take the flight, which was scheduled to take off at 9. But at the last minute, they were told that the flight had developed a snag. Another plane had to be arranged which caused the delay, sources from the Chief Minister's Office told The New Indian Express. "The alternative flight had to come from Mumbai and by the time the chief minister took off, it was nearly 1 pm," the sources added.

CM Basavaraj Bommai feeds a cow during the BJP state executive committee meeting in Hubballi on Tuesday | D HEMANTH

As he realised it would be a long wait, Bommai moved to a hotel close to the airport and attended the Infosys Foundation programme through video conference at 11 am. As per the original schedule, he was to reach Hubballi by 9.45 am and attend the event via video conference from there.

It was just on Monday that the chief minister was the victim of Bengaluru's infamous traffic gridlock as his envoy was caught in peak hour traffic because of a communication gaffe.

After inaugurating Krishi Bhavan-2 near Corporation Circle, Bommai was scheduled to go to National College Grounds in Basavanagudi to distribute compensation cheques to those who lost their family members to Covid. But a message was sent out to the security personnel that the chief minister was heading to his official residence. As the convoy proceeded, it was realised midway that the CM had to head to National College Grounds and the convoy tried to reroute. CONTINUED ON: P4

Minister: II PU exams likely to be postponed

ENS @Bengaluru

THE second PU exams, scheduled to be held in March, are likely to be postponed to the last week of April as portions are yet to be completed, Primary and Secondary Education Minister BC Nagesh told The New Indian Express on Tuesday.

The exams cannot be delayed beyond April, as it would affect the schedules of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), Common Entrance Test and other entrance exams for students, Nagesh explained.

Till recently, the PU Department had maintained that the exams would be held as per schedule in March. But lecturers have complained that they have not completed the syllabi because of Covid restrictions.

A formal circular on the postponement is yet to be issued.

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